

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 2-5, 8, 10, and 16-20 were previously cancelled. Claim 11 has been amended herein. New claims 21-27 are presented herein. All of the pending claims 1, 6, 7, 9, 11-15, and 21-25 are presented below. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application. Please enter these claims as amended.

Listing of the Claims:

1. (Withdrawn) A process for modulating virulence of a *Streptococcus* comprising:
modifying a genomic fragment of the *Streptococcus*;
wherein at least part of the genomic fragment is capable of hybridizing to the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11; and
generating a clone having the modified genomic fragment.

2-5. (Canceled).

6. (Withdrawn) The process according to claim 1, wherein modifying the genomic fragment comprises functionally deleting the at least part of the genomic fragment capable of hybridizing to the nucleotide sequence.

7. (Withdrawn) A clone of a *Streptococcus*, obtained by the process according to claim 1.

8. (Canceled).

9. (Withdrawn) A process for assaying virulence of a *Streptococcus* comprising:
assaying an ability of the *Streptococcus* to infect a subject;
wherein the *Streptococcus* comprises a genomic fragment associated with a virulence factor to infect a subject; and

wherein at least part of the genomic fragment is capable of hybridizing to the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11.

10. (Canceled).

11. (Currently amended) An isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprising:
a nucleotide sequence of [[a]] *Streptococcus* origin; comprising:
a nucleotide sequence capable of hybridizing wherein the nucleotide sequence hybridizes
to the full length of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:37; and
~~wherein the hybridizing occurs~~ at 65°C in a buffer having 0.5 M sodium phosphate, 1 mM EDTA, and 7% sodium dodecyl sulphate at a pH of 7.2.

12. (Original) A vector comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11.

13. (Previously presented) A host cell comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11.

14. (Original) The host cell of claim 13, wherein the host cell is of a *Streptococcus* origin.

15. (Previously Presented) A composition comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11.

16-20. (Canceled).

21. (New) An isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule comprising:
a nucleotide sequence of *Streptococcus* origin
wherein the nucleotide sequence hybridizes to the full length nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:37 at 65°C in a buffer having 0.5 M sodium phosphate, 1 mM EDTA, and 7% sodium dodecyl sulphate at a pH of 7.2.
wherein the nucleic acid molecule remains hybridized after
washing twice with a buffer containing 40 mM sodium phosphate (pH 7.2), 1 mM EDTA and 5% sodium dodecyl sulphate for 30 minutes at 65°C and;
washing twice with a buffer containing 40 mM sodium phosphate (pH 7.2), 1 mM EDTA and 1% sodium dodecyl sulphate for 30 minutes at 65°C.
22. (New) A vector comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 21.
23. (New) A host cell comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 21.
24. (New) The host cell of claim 23, wherein the host cell is of a *Streptococcus* origin.
25. (New) A composition comprising the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 21.
26. (New) The complement of the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 11.
27. (New) The complement of the isolated or recombinant nucleic acid molecule of claim 21.